

Procedure 0320.02 Forms Design Standards
Issued January 6, 1997

SUBJECT: Forms Design Standards.

APPLICATION: Executive Branch Departments and Sub-units.

PURPOSE: To provide agencies with efficient, functional public forms.

CONTACT AGENCY: Department of Management and Budget (DMB)
Agency Services, Print, Warehouse, and Surplus Services
7461 Crowner Dr., State Secondary Complex
Lansing, Michigan 48913

TELEPHONE: 517/322-1891

FAX: 517/322-5968

SUMMARY: This section provides standards for designing public forms.

APPLICABLE FORMS: DMB-563 (Rev. 12/95), Forms Efficiency Analysis Record.

POLICY:

- Set-up quantity and the paper size used for printing are determined by the total quantity of printed pieces. Non-standard sizes should not be considered.
- Forms designed as self-mailers must meet all requirements of the U.S. Postal Service as published in the domestic Mail Manual under Section C, Characteristics and Contents; for Business Reply-self Mailers, under Section S, Special Services.
- Normal file card sizes are 3 x 5 inch, 4 x 6 inch, and 5 x 8 inch, as well as standard 80-column cut card.
- Postcard sizes are minimum 3 1/2 x 5 inch, maximum 4 1/4 x 6 inch; with minimum .007 thickness, maximum thickness .016 inch.
- Legal size is 8 1/2 x 14 inches.

STANDARDS:

- Electronic Forms:
 - Where possible, use Electronic Forms. For details contact PRINTING SERVICES.

- **Cut Form Sizes:**

- Design forms for standard finished sizes as listed below. Consider size limits of filing facilities: letter size (preferred), legal size, card size. Finished Size

Finished Size (inches)	Set-up Required (per page)	Printing Paper Size (inches)
		8-1/2 x 11 (Bus. Cards)
2 x 3-1/2	12	8-1/2 x 11
3 x 5, 3-1/2 x 5	4	11 x 17
3 x 5	10	8-1/2 x 11, 17 x 22
3-1/2 x 7-3/8	3 or 15	8-1/2 x 14
4 x 6	4	8-1/2 x 11 Card Stock
4 x 6 Card	2	8-1/2 x 11
5-1/2 x 8-1/2	2 or 4	11 x 17, 17 x 22
8-1/2 x 11	2	17 x 22
11 x 17		

- **Camera Ready Originals:**

- All forms should be reproduced from high-resolution originals to ensure readability of type, screens (shaded areas), and rule lines. Generally 1240 dots per inch (dpi) is the acceptable standard when using the offset printing method for printing forms. 600 dpi is acceptable if printing is done on electronic laser printers.

- **Paper Grade:**

- Generally one of the following should be used:
 - Bond
 - Offset
 - Index
- Use the standard color sequence when printing multiple part carbonless forms. To reduce cost further, the same information should be printed on each part.
 - Select carbon interleaved or carbonless set based on: Handling requirements, methods used to fill out form (handwritten, typed, etc.), numbers of copies required at 1 writing, areas of the form to be filled in initially or at a later time (i.e., or is a portion of the form required to have "spot carbon"?), length of time the form will be retained, printing requirements (Is printing required on both sides of the form; is a certain process required?), filing and storage space requirements (affected by the size, thickness and type of paper used), laser printer compatibility, and cost to print quantity needed.

- Color of Paper:
 - Use colored paper only when needed for emphasis or for more efficient filing, routing or sorting. Reduce the need for colored paper by use of sorting symbols, bold headings, heavy ruled lines or other symbols when possible. If the form will be microfilmed, it should be printed on white paper.
- Color of Ink:
 - Specify more than 1 color of ink only when fully justified by increased efficiency in use of the form.
- Identification and Heading:
 - Heading may be centered across entire top of form or in space to the left of any entry boxes placed in upper right. (Upper right should be designed for file or other ready-reference entries if needed.) Within space decided upon, arrange generally as follows:
 - Form Number - front, conspicuous location; preferably one of four corners.
 - Agency Name - face of form.
 - Form Title - top; use conspicuous type.
 - Authorization for the form, Act number and date. Public Act number and date and penalty should be in small type below title.
 - Non-Discrimination Clause - The following clause is one option that agencies may use to notify the public of equal opportunity policies, in the areas of general non-discrimination, equally effective communication, program accessibility, and employment:

THE DEPARTMENT OF _____ WILL NOT DISCRIMINATE AGAINST ANY INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP BECAUSE OF RACE, SEX, RELIGION, AGE, NATIONAL ORIGIN, COLOR, MARITAL STATUS, DISABILITY, OR POLITICAL BELIEFS.

NOTE: The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that printed materials tell the readers how disabled persons can access the services provided by the department/agency responsible for form, etc. Following is an example that may be used: **In accordance with Michigan Law and Americans with Disabilities Act requirements, an alternate format of this printed material may be obtained by contacting the respective state agency or department.**

- Race or Ethnicity -- If the form asks the individual to select a classification to designate his or her race or ethnicity, the form must include the classification "Multiracial" and a definition of that term.

The multiracial question should be separate from the standard race question. For example: "are you multiracial? ___Yes ___No." When feasible, it is also recommended that the multiracial question should provide an opportunity for respondents to mark all of the individual races that apply to them. Sample race questions that reflect state and federal mandates and other design considerations are available from the office of the State Demographer, Michigan Department of Management and Budget.

The definition of "Multiracial" should indicate that people are considered multiracial if they have parents from more than one of the broad race categories listed in the standard race question, or if they have a parent who is multiracial.

- Notary -- If notary is required by law, a notary area should be provided.
- Is information voluntary or required?
- Is there a penalty or consequence for non-compliance? If yes, state the penalty or consequence explicitly.
- Assignment date/revision date - located next to form number (usually at the bottom of form).

- Instructions:

- When required, should be clear and concise and in the area that will be most beneficial to the user and still meet the planned format requirement of the agency. If a check or money order must accompany the form, state: "Make check or money order payable to State of Michigan".

- Address:

- If a name and address are to be placed on the form by the agency for mailing, they should be positioned to be suitable for a standard window envelope when practical.
- Forms intended for use in window envelopes must conform to postal regulations, which, in general, provide that nothing other than name and address shall appear in the window. Standard window envelopes can be identified by referring to the Domestic Mail Manual, Section C, Characteristics and Contents and to section S, Special Services for Business Reply Mail.

- Pre-Printed Names or Facsimile Signatures:

- If a form is to be stocked for continuing use, personal names or signatures of officials may be pre-printed by special justification or by legal requirement only. This is to avoid having large numbers of forms made obsolete by changes of officials. Pre-printing of titles only, or use of rubber stamps or automatic signature inscribers, are alternatives to be considered.

- Township Name

When both a township and city or village name appear in the text of the form, the township name must be given the same emphasis (font type and size and as is given the city of village)
- Form Arrangement:
 - Avoid crowding content.
 - Conform to dimensions of storage and filing facilities; i.e., letter size (preferred), legal size, etc. See addition under "Cut Form Sizes".
 - Fit to standard office machines for fill-in (i.e., typewriter).
 - Fit to standard size envelopes.
 - To minimize the number of tabular stops, align the beginning of each writing space on the form vertically.
 - If box design is used, serially number each box if needed. Start caption in the upper left-hand corner to the right of the number leaving fill-in space below the caption. Design the box size to provide sufficient space for fill-in.
 - Place essential information where it will not be obscured by stamps, punches or staples, or be torn off with detachable stubs.
 - Group related items.
 - Include "to" and "from" spaces for any necessary routing.
 - Design for use of window envelopes, when appropriate, to save additional addressing.
 - To the extent practicable, provide the same sequence of items as on other forms from which, or to which, information is to be transferred.
 - Arrange information for ease in tabulating.
- Check/Ballot Boxes:
 - Use check/ballot boxes when practicable.
 - Place check/ballot boxes before or after text and on the same line with the text.
 - If items require more than 1 check/ballot box place boxes in a straight line, vertical or horizontal.
 - When carbon copies are required, avoid check/ballot boxes, if possible, due to the possibility of poor registration.

- Margins:
 - Printing margin: Generally, borders printed all around should not be used. They tend to increase production problems and costs. A margin of 3/8 inch or not less than 3/10 inch from the edge of the paper should be allowed on all 4 sides for gripping requirements in printing and as a safety margin for cutting. No printing, neither border nor text, will be permitted in that space.
 - Binding margin: For press-type fasteners, side or top, and for ring binders, allow at least 3/4 inch (printing permitted but no fill-in within these margins).
 - Fill-in margin: Place the top typewriting line at least 1/3 inch from top of paper, if possible. Place the bottom typewriting line not less than 2/3 inch from bottom. Filling in by hand is permissible above or below these lines.
- Space Requirements for Fill-In:
 - Typewritten - Allow 10 characters to the horizontal inch, to accommodate both elite and pica type and three fill-in line spaces to the vertical inch. Use single space only if necessary.
 - Handwritten - Allow 1/3 more space horizontally than for typewritten fill-in, i.e., three or four line spaces to the vertical inch.
- Ruled Lines:
 - Use heavy, medium and hairline ruled lines on forms. When ruled lines will assist the individual filling in the form, or the processor completing the collection of data.
 - Use ruled lines to separate major divisions, across column headings, above a total or a balance at the foot of a column. Also use ruled lines and boxed lines for vertical subdivisions of major sections of columns.
 - Use dot leaders to guide the eye in tabular or semi-tabular items.
- Signature and Approval Date:
 - Place handwritten signatures in the most advantageous location for processing. Provide adequate space for date and signature.
- Two-Sided Forms:
 - Determine head to head or head to foot printing based on form handling. Print head to foot (top of front to bottom of back) if the form is top punched for binder use. Print head to head if the form is punched in the left margin for binder use.

- Print head to head throughout if three or four forms (1 sheet folded once) are open-side style, and head to foot if open-end (so that, when opened for use, head of third page follows foot of second page).
- Head to foot, open-end forms are preferable for machine fill-in.
- Pre-Numbering:
 - Use pre-numbered forms only if accounting or control is required for each form or document.
- Punching:
 - For standard press type 3-hole ring binders, punch the holes a distance of 3/8 inch from edge of paper to center of hole and 4 1/4 inches from center to center of adjacent holes.
 - For a press-type 2-hole fastener, punch holes a distance of 2 3/4 inches between centers.
- Final Check-List:
 - Does horizontal and vertical spacing conform to the handwritten method, typewritten or both?
 - Has sufficient space been allowed for certifications, signatures, titles and dates?
 - Are vertical rules aligned to reduce tabular stops and does the typing start from a common left margin?
 - Have space requirements for each individual item been verified?
 - Accurate position for signature spaces.
 - Information grouped and organized.
 - If applicable, meets postal requirements.
 - If applicable, meets cashier's requirements (blank space for validation).
 - If applicable, meets requirements of Executive Directive 1991-6 (See Procedure 0330.01).

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